

STRIKERS HOLD THE KEY TO FIRST ROUND

AFTER last season's F.A. Cup exploits against Newport County and Peterborough United, Wycombe Wanderers bid for a place in this season's competition proper when they take on Margate in the fourth qualifying round at Lookes Park tomorrow (Saturday). And Wycombe are fully aware of the size of the task facing them.

This term Margate have been riding high in the Premier Division of the Southern League which is regarded as the stepping stone into the Football League. At present they are in fourth place with a highly impressive away record of only two defeats in 10 matches.

Until Saturday, the only club to beat them was Chelmsford while Margate in the meantime, took a point from the leaders Yeovil in a 2-2 draw and beat Guildford, Wealdstone, Gravesend and Dartford. Another victory was expected at Bath last week but the coastal club were soundly beaten 1-4, their heaviest defeat of the season by far.

But make no mistake about it, after a disappointing record last term, Margate have come right back into the reckoning and they themselves have a proud record in the F.A. Cup which they will want to maintain tomorrow.

Two league clubs have come to grief at their Hartdown ground — Bournemouth and Swansea City while Crystal

F.A. CUP PREVIEW BY STUART EARP

Palace, Brentford, Notts County and Millwall were all taken to replays. Two of Margate's more famous matches against Football League clubs have been in recent years.

11-0 DEFEAT

In 1972 they met Bournemouth again and were unceremoniously thrashed to the tune of 11-0, a certain Ted McDougall scoring nine of the goals and then, the following year, Margate hit the Cup trail again. Swansea City were beaten 1-0 at home and then Walton and Hershaw's fine run came to a disappointing end when they lost to the seashiders 0-1 at home.

after beating Exeter in the first round. The round three draw paired Margate at home to Tottenham Hotspur. In front of a large crowd, Margate went down 6-0 but won many friends with a courageous display.

In comparison to those achievements, last year's F.A. Cup run was non-existent. They drew at home to Wycombe's fellow Isthmian Leaguers Leytonstone before losing the replay 3-1 at Granleigh Road.

All in all, Margate appear to have a useful side as their league record this season suggests. And they hope that 4-1 reverse at Bath on Saturday will put the team in the right frame of mind.

"The hammering at Bath was a timely jolt for the side," said manager Riggs. "We were too complacent and were caught napping, but it means the side will not be at all complacent for the cup-tie. They realise they have a hard fight ahead but intend to concentrate on attack. There will be no reason of having a draw target to force a replay at Hartdown."

Margate officials remember the seashiders securing a 4-2 win at Wycombe nearly 20 years ago.

"We have some confidence from the fact that we were successful in our only previous cup clash with Wycombe

Wanderers," said long serving secretary Mr. Alan Kay.

That 4-2 defeat came in 1956, when the two teams met in the Fourth Qualifying Round. A crowd of 7,200 watched the game which stood 1-2 at half time. Len Worley and Cliff Trott hit Wycombe's goals and the side that day was: Dennis Syrett, Barry Darvill, Frank Westley, Fred Lawson, Michael Wicks, Jim Moring, Len Worley, Cliff Trott, Paul Bates, Frank Smith and Geoff Truett.

Latest team news of the Wanderers side reveals that Terry Reardon is fighting off the effects of 'flu in a bid to be fit in time. Terry trained on Tuesday and Thursday. If he fails in his fitness effort, there will be no place for Dave Alexander whose permit came through too late from the F.A. to make him eligible for tomorrow's encounter. Alexander needs 14 days to qualify for the fourth qualifying round of the F.A. Cup. This means that Graham Mackenzie is likely to play if Reardon has not recovered.

Apart from that, Wycombe report a clean bill of health. And their hopes of success in this all-important match will hinge on a problem that has been nagging them all season. In the majority of their games, the Blues have created enough goalscoring chances to have won with ease. But they just have not been taken.

Every other aspect of the team is sound. The defence, with Keith Mead, John Maskell and Gary Hand all on their very best form this season, should have few problems in holding their opponents at bay while midfield have recently showed the kind of work rate needed and have enough skill to prise open any defence.

It is the front men who really need to be at their best. Keith Searle is now approaching top form but Steve Perrin and Tony Horseman have both been slightly disappointing compared with last year.

If they can take some of the opportunities that will undoubtedly come their way tomorrow, there is no reason why the name of Wycombe Wanderers should not go into the first round draw on Monday.

Margate also have two injury worries after their 1-0 Kent Midweek Competition victory over Dover on Tuesday night. Centre-half Breach was kicked in the face during the game and was forced to go to hospital. He is a doubtful starter for tomorrow, but striker Gilbert, who suffered a gash on the shin, should be fit.

Meet Margate's squad

STEVE BOWTELL: Ever present 'keeper in the side last season. Signed from Orient with whom he made several League appearances.

DENNIS BUTLER: Experienced defender signed from Reading during the close season. Made 364 Football League appearances for Chelsea, Hull City and Reading.

RAY SUMMERS: Despite his youth, has made nearly 200 appearances for the club over the past five seasons.

ALAN BUTTERFIELD: Signed three seasons ago from Chelmsford City. Has also played for Brentwood and Millwall.

GRAHAM SAWYER: After six seasons with Ramsgate, signed for the club two years ago. Also with Hillingdon and Brentford.

STEVE BREACH: Young central defender signed from Brighton two seasons ago.

COLIN CLEWLOW: Since joining from Dover three seasons ago has played in every position for the club. Joined Dover on leaving school and spent six seasons with them.

JOHN BAKER: Has made nearly 200 appearances for the club since joining from Southend United four seasons ago.

EDDIE CLAYTON: Margate's most experienced player. Spent 12 seasons with Spurs as a member of their first team squad. Came to Margate four years ago.

VIC PAIN: Signed during the close season from Crystal Palace, his only previous club whom he joined as a youth.

CARL GILBERT: Another close season signing. Commenced his career with Gillingham, was transferred at a considerable fee to Bristol City, and then spent three seasons at Rotherham. Scored 61 goals in the Football League.

BARRY BROWN: In 200 appearances for the club, has scored 70 goals. Now in his fifth season, after playing for Kent sides Home Bay and Deal Town.

BRUCE WALKER: Equally at home as a defender or an attacker. Despite 30 appearances at full back last season, he still managed to score 18 goals. Started his career with Swindon Town, then joined Exeter City, Hereford United and Nuneaton.

DAVID ROUSE: 18-year-old who spent a season full time with Luton Town on leaving school. Rejoined Margate last season.

NORMAN FUSCO: Now in his third season. Played for Charlton Athletic as a youth.

LES RIGGS: Manager, had a full Football League career as a player with Gillingham, Newport County and Bury. Joined neighbouring Ramsgate as a player-manager and after six seasons with them, moved to Margate as manager in November 1971.